

EXHIBIT C

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Friday, February 23, 2024
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL DRISCOLL, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS

BILL: 240013

1 thank you for allowing the Police
2 Department the opportunity to voice
3 its opinion on Bill No. 240013,
4 creating a commercial establishment
5 curfew in the Kensington area.

6 As you know as part of the
7 Mayor's Executive Order issued on
8 January 2, 2024, the Police
9 Commissioner has been tasked with
10 developing a strategy among other
11 strategies to permanently shut down
12 all pervasive open air drug markets
13 including, but not limited to, the
14 open air drug markets in the
15 Kensington neighborhood of
16 Philadelphia.

17 Commissioner Bethel
18 appointed Pedro Rosario as our
19 Deputy Commissioner to specifically
20 oversee this development or the
21 development and implementation of
22 the strategy. As such, the PPD is
23 very grateful for any additional
24 tools that can be used to assist
25 and accomplish in our mission.

1 For this reason, the PPD
2 fully supports the creation of the
3 commercial establishment curfew for
4 businesses between the hours of
5 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. We
6 believe this curfew can positively
7 impact crime and disorder that
8 historically occurs during the
9 overnight hours.

10 Equally important, we
11 believe this bill can create a
12 synergy with a plan being developed
13 by the PPD to address not only open
14 air drug markets but the overall
15 quality of life for residents in
16 the Kensington area. With that
17 said, I'd like to specifically
18 thank Councilmembers Lozada,
19 Harrity and Phillips for
20 introducing this bill.

21 On behalf of the
22 Commissioner, again thank you for
23 allowing us the opportunity to
24 voice our opportunity and I'll be
25 happy to answer any questions.

1 That concludes my testimony.

2 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

3 Commissioner, thank you for your
4 testimony. I don't know if we have
5 any questions from the panel for
6 the Commissioner.

7 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: I
8 just have one question. Deputy
9 Commissioner, thank you for your
10 testimony this morning. Can you
11 speak to what you all in the police
12 department have found within that
13 target area as it relates to
14 business activity that you all have
15 to respond to between that
16 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.?

17 What is the type of calls
18 you all receive to address in that
19 area? How does it impact the
20 community from your standpoint, and
21 have you all had an opportunity to
22 talk to community residents about
23 figuring out how you improve or
24 change what is happening during the
25 course of that time?

1 by commending the residents and the
2 organizations in Kensington. They
3 have really been resilient in their
4 efforts to have the City officials
5 address what we believe is cleaning
6 up Kensington, improving the
7 quality of life and providing
8 services that are vital to the
9 City's success of showing up as a
10 world class city.

11 I also commend Mayor Parker
12 for placing this issue at the top
13 of her agenda in her 100-day plan,
14 action plan for the City, and the
15 Councilmembers who have recently
16 formed the Kensington Caucus which
17 aims to execute a
18 neighborhood-driven plan to address
19 this crisis.

20 And finally, I commend
21 Councilman Jones on his recent bill
22 to ban the gaming machines because
23 we also see it as part of these
24 nuisance businesses that operate
25 24/7 and kind of contribute to

1 this. However, I want to caution
2 the City from looking at this as an
3 isolated issue that only impacts
4 Kensington.

5 While Kensington is ground
6 zero and has by far seen the worst
7 of the epidemic and certainly
8 deserves every resource and
9 enforcement effort, the Frankford
10 neighborhood which is only
11 separated by one train stop, that's
12 the area in Torresdale Station, is
13 also a very vulnerable neighborhood
14 with very similar demographics when
15 it comes to racial makeup, poverty,
16 educational attainment, vacancy,
17 blight and disinvestment.

18 Bill No. 240013 seeks to
19 limit the operation hours of
20 certain businesses along Kensington
21 and Frankford Avenue corridor from
22 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. We
23 understand and appreciate the need
24 for this legislation because
25 similar to Kensington, Frankford

1 has a number of what we call smoke
2 shops and businesses that operate
3 with food establishment licenses,
4 but they barely sell any food that
5 have hours that extend for 24
6 hours.

7 These establishments have
8 also served as a nuisance on our
9 commercial corridor. And several
10 of them have been shut down on
11 numerous occasions by L&I and by
12 the Health Department, but they
13 soon open right back up within a
14 day or two. They have been a site
15 for illegal drug sales,
16 prostitution, shootings and other
17 violent crimes.

18 During COVID we've seen a
19 number of these 24/7 convenience
20 stores open up along the commercial
21 corridor, leaving us with about
22 three or four every block of
23 Frankford Avenue between Church
24 Street and Bridge Street. That's
25 how concentrated it is.

1 So again, we understand and
2 appreciate what you're aiming to do
3 with this bill. However, to limit
4 the bill from Lehigh to Tioga
5 leaves Frankford in a very
6 vulnerable place. Like I said,
7 we're only separated by one train
8 stop. And so, what you do in
9 Kensington will likely push that
10 activity to Frankford because once
11 those -- the height of the activity
12 is like the Police Commissioner
13 said from 11:00 to 6:00 a.m.,
14 right, because L&I is not out there
15 to shut them down, Health
16 Department is not out there, a lot
17 of people are not out there calling
18 the cops, so that is the height of
19 the activity.

20 If you close it down in
21 Kensington from 11:00 to 6:00, they
22 can come right up the street, and
23 we have three to four on every
24 block on our commercial corridor,
25 and that activity will simply move